

CLAIMS:

We claim:

5 1. A nuclease resistant probe comprising 2'-O-substituted RNA and having donor and acceptor species attached at or near its termini.

10 2. A probe as claimed in claim 1 and further comprising a stem duplex consisting of nucleotide sequences 5' and 3' to a target complementary sequence.

15 3. A probe as claimed in claim 2 wherein the stem duplex is of 3-6 bases in length.

4. A probe as claimed in any one of claims 1-3 wherein the 2-O-substituent is an alkyl group.

5. A probe as claimed in claim 3 wherein the alkyl group is methyl.

20 6. A diagnostic assay which comprises the use of a probe as claimed in any one of the previous claims.

7. A diagnostic assay as claimed in claim 6 and being a real time assay.

25 8. A diagnostic kit comprising one or more probes as claimed in any one of the previous claims together with one or more of appropriate buffers, reagents and instructions for use.